



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **DERBY WINNER RICH STRIKE RETURNS TO CHURCHILL DOWNS TO PREP FOR BELMONT STAKES**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, May 19, 2022)** – **RED TR-Racing's** Kentucky Derby (Grade I) winner **Rich Strike** arrived at Churchill Downs on Wednesday from his home base of **Mercury Equine Center** in Lexington, Ky. to begin his preparation for the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) on June 11.

Rich Strike, who shocked the racing world at odds of 80-1 with his victory in the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve, spent 10 days at Mercury Equine Center before his return to Churchill Downs. Rich Strike galloped at 5:45 a.m. Thursday and is scheduled to breeze Saturday at 7:30 a.m.

"When he got off the van you could see his chest puff up," trainer **Eric Reed** said. "He absolutely loves it here. I think he knows when he's here he has a job to do."

The Belmont Stakes is the third jewel of racing's Triple Crown. Reed decided to skip the second jewel, Saturday's \$1.5 million Preakness Stakes (GI).

"I just kept going back to how he wouldn't be mentally ready to run in two weeks," Reed said. "Our original plan if we didn't get in the Derby was to run in the Belmont. So, we're sticking with that plan."

Rich Strike is scheduled to gallop at 5:45 a.m. Friday.

**TWO-TIME STAKES WINNER SHAMROCKET 4-1 MORNING LINE FAVORITE IN SATURDAY'S LOUISVILLE** – **Donegal Racing's** multiple stakes winner **Shamrocket** was made the slight 4-1 morning line favorite in an oversubscribed field of 15 turf marathon runners for Saturday's 85<sup>th</sup> running of the \$200,000 Louisville Stakes (Grade III) at Churchill Downs.

Saturday's Louisville Stakes will go as the finale on the 11-race program with a post time of 5:58 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 12:45 p.m. Fans are invited to stay after the Louisville to watch the Preakness Stakes (GI) on the Big Board. Post time for the Preakness is 7:01 p.m.

Trained by **Todd Pletcher**, the Florida-bred Shamrocket began his 5-year-old campaign with a half-length victory in the \$75,000 Sunshine Classic Stakes at Gulfstream. Previously, the son of Tonalist scored a half-length win in the \$100,000 Point of Entry Stakes at 1 ½ miles over the Belmont turf course. **Umberto Rispoli** will ride Shamrocket from post No. 10.

Here's the complete field for the Louisville from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Bama Breeze** (Corey Lanerie, Rusty Arnold, 12-1); **Cavalry Charge** (David Cohen, Dallas Stewart, 12-1); **Blanket of Roses** (Edgar Morales, Rey Hernandez, 50-1); **Cibolian** (Chris Landeros, Rodolphe Brisset, 12-1); **Ajourneytofreedom** (Javier Castellano, Mike Maker, 5-1); **Strong Tide** (Marcelino Pedroza, Mike Lauer, 10-1); **Modus Operandi (IRE)** (Joe Talamo, Brendan Walsh, 15-1); **Another Mystery** (Jareth Loveberry, Chris Block, 6-1); **Camp Hope** (James Graham, Kenny McPeck, 6-1); Shamrocket (Rispoli, Pletcher, 4-1); **Cullum Road** (Declan Cannon, Doug Danner, 30-1); **Highest Honors** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Chad Brown, 8-1); **Cellist** (Julien Leparoux, Rusty Arnold, 10-1); and **Reigning Spirit** (Colby Hernandez, Al Stall Jr., 15-1). Also eligible: **Celerity** (Vincent Cheminaud, Waylon Cundiff, 50-1).

**GAFFALIONE WINS 11 LAST WEEK TO LEAD STANDINGS** – Perennial leading rider **Tyler Gaffalione** notched 11 victories in the last four racing days at Churchill Downs to vault to the top of the jockey standings with 15 overall wins. New York-based **Luis Saez** was tied for second with **Brian Hernandez Jr.** with eight wins. ... Trainer **Brad Cox** led the standings with six wins over **Steve Asmussen**, **Mike Maker**, **Bill Mott** and **Brendan Walsh** who had five wins. ... **Godolphin** and **Peter Brant** were both tied with three wins in the owner's standings.

**THIS WEEK AT CHURCHILL DOWNS** – Racing at Churchill Downs will continue Thursday for Twilight Thursday. First post for the eight-race card is 5 p.m. and fans will be able to enjoy \$2 domestic canned beer and Blue Moon, live country music from the **Shane Dawson Trio** and local food truck fare from **MRC's Cheesecake**, **Bamba Eggrolls**, **Good Belly**, **Crave Street Kitchen**, **Flavorville** and **Lil Cheezers**.

Friday has a first post of 12:45 p.m. for a nine-race program. The card opens with a pair of 2-year-old maiden special weight contests. Race 1 is scheduled for five furlongs on the Matt Winn Turf Course and Race 2 will be contested at 4 ½ furlongs on dirt. Both races are worth purses of \$120,000. The featured event is Race 8 where a wide-open cast of 12 colts and geldings will contest a conditioned allowance event at 1 1/16 miles on turf for a purse of \$136,000.

Saturday is Preakness Stakes Day. Fans will be able to watch a live broadcast of the Preakness immediately after the last race. The Preakness has a scheduled post time of 7:01 p.m., about an hour after the finale from Churchill Downs.

Entries for Sunday's nine-race card will be released Thursday afternoon.

Turf racing all weekend at Churchill Downs will be contested in Lane 2, 12 ft. from the inside rail.

**CHURCHILL DOWNS RACING TO AIR ON FOX SPORTS 2** – Churchill Downs racing will air on Fox Sports 2 this week as part of “America's Day at the Races” produced by the New York Racing Association. Here is the TV schedule for the next four racing days:

Thursday: 3-8:30 p.m.

Friday: 12:30-5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 12-6:30 p.m.

Sunday: 12:30-5:30 p.m.

**CHURCHILL DOWNS LIVE AVAILABLE ON SMART TVs** – The **Churchill Downs LIVE** app is available free of charge on streaming services such as Amazon, Apple TV and Roku. Fans can download the Churchill Downs LIVE app for full access to a free HD live stream of the Churchill Downs simulcast signal and three additional angles including the saddling paddock.

Fans will get expert analysis each race day from host **Joe Kristufek** along with several expert analysts such as **Kaitlin Free**, **James Scully**, **Scott Shapiro** and **Brandon Stauble**.

Wagering is available on [www.TwinSpires.com](http://www.TwinSpires.com), the official ADW of Churchill Downs Inc. and the Kentucky Derby.

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – The Derby City 6 had a carryover of \$17,664. The sequence spanned Races 3-8 Thursday. ... Jockey **Chris Landeros** will now be represented by **Chris Pipito**. Landeros was previously represented by his brother-in-law **Brodie Wilkes**, who will travel to Australia and pursue a training career. Pipito also represents Mid-Atlantic based **Feargal Lynch**. ... “**Inside Churchill Downs**” will return Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. The one-hour show hosted by Churchill Downs’ **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein**, along with expert handicapper **Scott Shapiro**, will preview Saturday’s Preakness Stakes. Those outside the Louisville market can listen to a live stream on [www.espnloouisville.com](http://www.espnloouisville.com). ... For more information about the Spring Meet, visit [www.churchilldowns.com](http://www.churchilldowns.com).

#### **ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK**

Churchill Downs Racetrack (“CDRT”), the world’s most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The saddling paddock and the stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

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